1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5



severed from her conjugal *okka* the children are also severed from their paternal *okka*. While the widow or divorcée automatically reverts to her natal *okka*, her children have to be given rights at a special *sammanda* ceremony.[1]

If, however, the widow or divorcée marries again, the children do not follow her automatically into her new husband's *okka*. They are members of their mother's *okka*, and the unanimous consent of the members of their mother's *okka* and that of the members of the mother's new husband's *okka* is necessary to transfer them from one to the other.

Elders usually make efforts to ensure that the children of an unsanctioned union are given membership of their father's *okka*. It is clearly recognized that he who had the pleasure of being genitor has the duty of becoming pater as well, and this means that the children of an unsanctioned union have to be made members of the genitor's *okka*. Where, however, for various reasons the children cannot be given membership of their father's *okka*, they are given membership of their mother's *okka*. It is feared that if the children do not have membership in any *okka* people will refer to them contemptuously as 'the children born of adultery' (*mai kaṇat makka*).[2]

When a girl becomes pregnant as the result of union with a man not married to her, the girl's relatives press for recognition of the union. The man involved and his people might agree at once, in which case the girl's relatives have to go to the boys' home and give a feast to the relatives of the man and members of his village. The girl's relatives should carry with them all the provisions of this dinner, excepting mustard and salt.[3]

[1] The *sammanda* formulas used on this occasion are fundamentally similar to the formulas used in other cases. That is why I have not described them.

[2] In the folktale of Kanniaḍa Kāmayya, the boy Kāmayya's playmates refer to him contemptuously as 'one who is without a father'. Kāmayya is greatly hurt by this and tells his mother that he will fast unto death if the identity and whereabouts of his father are not disclosed. His mother tells him that he is miraculously born, and that his father is the very sacred axe (*chandrāyudha*) which is a symbol for a deity.

[3] Among Coorgs as among other patrilineal and patrilocal castes of south India, a girl has her first confinement in her natal home. The first confinement is believed to be a dangerous and critical affair, and it is considered best for the girl to have her mother and other relatives of her natal home with her at this time.

During the fifth or seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy, her mother and other relatives go to their affines carrying with them all the provisions of a

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848 596 627 After the dinner is over, the girl is given *sammanda* in the man's *okka*. When the members of the man's *okka* agree to give *sammanda* after the girl has given birth to a baby, both the mother and newly born child are admitted to membership.

Sometimes the agnatic relatives of the man might refuse to give *sammanda* to the woman and her children as long as both the man and woman are alive. But death of one of them might bring about a change in their attitude as the surviving spouse and children have important parts to play in the funeral ritual. If it is the woman who is dead, the giving of *sammanda* enables the corpse to be buried in the man's *okka's* burial-ground.

The members of the genitor's village who are present when *sammanda* is given should be collectively paid witness-money of a rupee.

The procedure which has been described above holds good whether the woman concerned is a spinster or a widow.

## IX

526 428 585 A Coorg proverb says, 'When the cattle-shed was destined to come to an end only bull calves were born, and when the *okka* was destined to come to an end only girls were born'. As mentioned earlier, an *okka* is threatened with extinction if there are no male heirs. If, however, there is an unmarried girl in such an *okka* she is married in either the *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* way. In both these forms the children born of the union perpetuate the mother's natal *okka*.

In the *sammanda* ritual performed at an *okka parijé* marriage, the bride's family friend definitely asks the groom's family friend whether in view of the absence of heirs in the bride's *okka* the groom is prepared to stand as 'the trunk' of the bride's *okka*.

No *sammanda* ritual is, however, necessary at a *makka parijé* marriage as the groom does not become a member of the bride's *okka*. A rite is performed which makes clear the implications of the kind of union entered into: the bride's family friend says, 'Since there is no heir in Muthamma's natal *okka*, Ponnappa of such-and-such an *okka* has agreed to unite with Muthamma, and it is the

[844] dinner, barring salt and mustard. The salt and mustard are provided by the affines. The affines and members of the affines' village are invited to this dinner which is called *kūḷ beppa* (keeping food). After the dinner has been given, the girl's relatives take the girl to her natal home.

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796 During the harvest festival a party of villagers go from house to
533 house, and at each house they visit they sing the 'house song',
622 which gives an account of the ancestors of that house. After the
[574] song is sung, the singers are treated to refreshments and given gifts of money.

The singers are required to visit the village-headman's house first. Similarly, the people who put on fancy dress during the harvest festival have to visit the village-headman's house first.

For a week before the beginning of the harvest festival all the adult males in the village gather together at the village-headman's house every evening before proceeding to the green to practise the dances and play some games. The guests are treated to a light
[574] repast, after which the headman asks someone to take up a *duḍi* (small drum) and sing. The person who is asked to sing may not
[681] refuse, and refusal is punishable by fine. Even the temple-headman is not exempt from this rule.

At the Kundat Bhadrakāḷi festival, the villagers frequently move about in processions during the last few days of the festival. At the head of these processions walks the *nāḍ*-headman's wife carrying
[778] a dish-lamp. A dish-lamp has ritual value, and it is essential on every ritual occasion, and it is the privilege of the *nāḍ*-headman's wife to carry it at the festival of Kundat Bhadrakāli.

178 The political and economic forces set in motion in the last 120
622 years have been responsible for certain structural inconsistencies
596 coming to the surface during festivals. It was not always the headman's *okka* which benefited from the new economic and educational opportunities. The *okkas* which benefited from the latter could ignore with impunity the headman's position and authority. Frequently the headman accepted the changed situation, and this not only failed to solve the conflict for supremacy between him and the newly rich *okkas* but instead accentuated it. The latter, having secured wealth and official positions, tried to secure headmanship too. Disputes became frequent.

[656] The breakdown of the traditional economy meant that frequently the headman could not fulfil the duties of hospitality periodically required of him; and when the headman was unable to perform his duties, he found it difficult to insist on others
178 performing their duties towards him. People began to gravitate to
622 the new centres of power, the officials and rich men.

●627 Formerly, people used to take their disputes to their headman

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on the occasion of the festival of the local village-deity. Such a festival ensured the presence of a large number of elders, a fact which added to the weight and authority of any decision given by the headman. Even more important was the fact that people were generally afraid to perjure themselves before a deity, and this was specially so in the case of some deities like Appangiriyappa of Kāṭakēri, well known for the severe punishment which he inflicted on perjurors.

The success with which a headman was able to settle disputes also depended on his wealth, the spread of his kinship ties, and his reputation for impartiality. The impoverishment of some headmen in recent years and the breakdown of the traditional way of life have been responsible for undermining the authority of the headmen.

## XI

Formerly, two or three neighbouring *nāḍs* came together occasionally to discuss matters of common concern. A folksong contains an appeal (*éyi koḍ*) to an assembly of the elders of two *nāḍs* from an assembly of the elders of a single *nāḍ*. Another folksong refers to the elders of three *nāḍs* meeting together.

The performance of certain calendar festivals such as the harvest festival requires the co-operation of several *nāḍs*. The ritual cutting of paddy sheaves constitutes the most important rite of the festival, and this has to be performed during a particular period on a particular day. Both the date and time of performance of the rite are decided only a fortnight before the festival by the astrologer of the Pāḍi Subramaṇya temple in Pāḍi village, who informs the assembled headmen of Pāḍināḷknāḍ of his decision. This is later conveyed to every *nāḍ*, village, and *okka*.

Coorgs everywhere in Coorg, with the exception of Kaḍiyetnāḍ people who performed the rite on a different day, accepted the decision of the astrologer of the Subramaṇya temple in Pāḍi. The acceptance produced uniformity in very many *nāḍs*. Such ritual uniformity provides common values and makes possible the integration of several *nāḍs* into a single community.

But it is chiefly Sanskritic Hinduism which provides Coorgs and other Hindus in Coorg with common values which transcend the barriers between *nāḍ* and *nāḍ*, and between caste and caste.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5



cribed to the curses and witchcrafts of enemies. The dead are supposed to trouble the living and to demand sacrifices and other atonements. Many of the Coorgs, though they may despise their old superstitions and neglect their idols, come to believe in nothing but money. The cruel despotism of their Rajahs engendered dissimulation, falsehood and treachery, and lying and deception, bribery and conspiracy are now often enough practised to ruin an opponent and to advance self-interest. The name of the Coorgs is still feared by their neighbours, who look upon them as proud, irritable and revengeful men, and such popular estimations of the character of a neighbouring race are seldom without some foundation. It still may happen, that the head of a Coorg house on his dying bed will solemnly charge his sons to reek vengeance on his personal enemies, a bequest which occasions calamitous feuds between succeeding generations.

The Coorgs have hitherto been an unlettered people. The Rajahs, themselves without education, did nothing for the instruction of their subjects. Even the English Government has for many years hardly attempted systematically to raise them in intelligence and character. Only lately most praiseworthy efforts have been made to satisfy the awakened popular desire for education in Coorg, and the provisions made have already borne good fruit in supplying Government with a body of well trained officials, though education is still in its first stage of development.

The public morality of the Coorgs is controlled by a council of elders called "Takka-mukyasteru", who are the moral censors and managers of social affairs, without however any magisterial power from Government. This institution dates from the Rajahs' time and is hereditary in certain families. The authority of the village Takkas extends over offences against social customs, attendance at public feasts and proper conduct during the same, drunkenness and adultery.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5



the old government since so well known as Zemindars or Polygars.

Up to this time the little Coorg country seems to have been of no political importance. Its chiefs, called Náyakas, ruled over their small Kómbus (districts), levied taxes within their dominions, which they guarded by boundary and defensive ditches (the Cadangas) and to assert and maintain their self-constituted importance they engaged in frequent feuds amongst themselves. The Keimatta or ancestral monument of the Achu-Náyaka of Anjigheri-nád in Kiggatnád taluq is still in good preservation. The family was exterminated about 60 years ago. Of the Beppunád chiefs the name of Utta Náyaka of the Arméri house is still in popular remembrance. In Padinalknád the name of Karanembán, the chief at Bhágamandala is mentioned with veneration. There may have been more Náyakas, and very likely one over each of the 12 Kómbus or districts, but the names of their houses are no longer known.

According to the Ráya Paddhati in Dr. Francis Buchanan's "Journey from Madras through Mysore etc." vol. III. p. 125, one of the chief Polygars, who on the decline of Vijayanagara assumed independence, was Sadásiva, the son of the Gauda of Kilidi or Ikeri. Being endowed with a government comprising Guty, Bárakuru, and Mangalúru, his name was changed into Sadásiva-Ráya-Náyaka and he and his descendants, who were styled Rájas of Kilidi or Ikeri, possessed the government for 203 years (from 1559-60 to 1762-63 A. D.)

From intelligent Coorgs I have learnt, that during the reign of this neighbouring dynasty an Ikeri prince came to Coorg, and settled in Hálerinád. At first he assumed the pious garb of a Jangam or Lingaite priest and as such gained a considerable influence over the people of the surrounding Náds. When feeling sure of his position, he imposed upon